

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing benchmarking comprising:
 - (a) conducting online interactive sessions with a plurality of respondents who supply response data to one or more benchmarking questions of a questionnaire;
 - (b) building a database with said response data of said respondents;
and
 - (c) providing benchmarking reports that utilize said response data upon a request.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) provides said benchmarking reports online.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein step (c) provides said benchmarking reports only if said request is made by an authorized requestor.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising: (d) providing online instant feedback to one of said respondents.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein said instant feed back is provided only when the questionnaire is completed.
6. The method of claim 4, wherein said instant feedback includes comparative data of the responses of said one respondent relative to responses submitted by others of said respondents.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising: (e) during a first one of said sessions, saving a partially completed set of answers to said questionnaire, and (f) presenting said partially completed set of answers in a subsequent second one of said sessions.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said first and second sessions are conducted with the same respondent.

9. A method for conducting a plurality of benchmarking studies comprising:

(a) conducting interactive sessions with respondents for each of said studies with a questionnaire, wherein the questionnaires of different ones of the studies (i) differ in content and format and (ii) have a common data structure;

(b) building a file for each study with the answers of each respondent for that study, wherein each file is organized according to said data structure;

(c) providing to a first respondent of a first one of said studies during said interactive session a feedback of comparative data from the file for said first study concerning a question said first respondent has answered; and

(d) processing the answer data in said files by keying on said data structure to produce benchmark reports.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said feedback occurs just after said first respondent completes the questionnaire.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein said data structure includes a question element that has question attributes and an answer element that has answer attributes.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said question attributes include an answer attribute.

13. The method of claim 12 wherein said question attributes include a categorized response attribute.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said question attributes include a verify group attribute.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said verify group attribute has a name, a test value and a user description.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein said question attributes optionally include a question text attribute.

17. The method of claim 11, wherein said answer attributes include a data type and an answer description.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said answer attributes further include one or more members of the group consisting of actual check, verify group, decimal places and units.

19. The method of claim 11, wherein the files built by step (b) are organized by said question element and said question attributes and by said answer element and said answer attributes.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said answer data in said files is processed by step (d) according to said question element and said question attributes and by said answer element and said answer attributes.

21. A system for conducting a plurality of benchmarking studies comprising:

a computer having a processor;

first means for causing said processor to perform a first operation of conducting interactive sessions with respondents for each of said studies with a questionnaire, wherein the questionnaires of different ones of the studies (i) differ in content and format and (ii) have a common data structure;

second means for causing said processor to perform a second operation of building a file for each study with the answers of each respondent for that study, wherein each file is organized according to said data structure;

third means for causing said processor to perform a third operation of providing to a first respondent of a first one of said studies during said interactive session a feedback of comparative data from the file for said first study concerning a question said first respondent has answered; and

fourth means for causing said processor to perform a fourth operation of processing the answer data in said files by keying on said data structure to produce benchmark reports.

22. A memory media for controlling a computer that conducts benchmarking studies, said memory media comprising:

first means for controlling said computer to perform a first operation of conducting interactive sessions with respondents for each of said studies with

a questionnaire, wherein the questionnaires of different ones of the studies (i) differ in content and format and (ii) have a common data structure;

second means for controlling said computer to perform a second operation of building a file for each study with the answers of each respondent for that study, wherein each file is organized according to said data structure;

third means for controlling said computer to perform a third operation of providing to a first respondent of a first one of said studies during said interactive session a feedback of comparative data from the file for said first study concerning a question said first respondent has answered; and

fourth means for controlling said computer to perform a fourth operation of processing the answer data in said files by keying on said data structure to produce benchmark reports.